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Letter dated 20 June 2012 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 7 June 2012 from Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, regarding the conclusions of the first meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 7 June 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the aforementioned letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

12-38411 (E) 110712 120712

Please recycle

Annex

[Original: French]

Abidjan, 7 June 2012

The current situation in Mali is cause for grave concern on the part of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. As you know, ECOWAS, with the support of the African Union, the United Nations and other members of the international community, has taken many initiatives to help resolve the institutional crisis arising from the coup d'état of 22 March 2012 and to rapidly restore the State's authority in the northern part of the country, which is currently occupied by armed groups, terrorists and criminals. The presence and actions of these groups pose a serious threat to the stability of Mali and of the region as a whole, and to international security.

You will recall that in the context of its support for the efforts to address Mali's twofold crisis, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union has put in place a Support and Follow-up Group, co-chaired by the African Union and the United Nations. I am pleased to inform you that this Group held its inaugural meeting in Abidjan on 7 June 2012 under the auspices of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations, including your Special Representative for West Africa, Mr. Said Djinnit, for its contribution to the consultations that led to the holding of the meeting and for the support provided with a view to its smooth running with the active participation of ECOWAS and the invaluable support of the Ivorian Government, which currently chairs ECOWAS.

Please find attached the conclusions of the meeting. I would be grateful if you would bring them to the attention of the members of the United Nations Security Council for their information and action as required.

It is important that the African Union and the United Nations continue to work closely together on the situation in Mali, and in the Sahel more generally, in order to meet the challenges there effectively and speedily. In a few days, at their joint consultative meeting in New York, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the United Nations Security Council will have the opportunity to discuss this situation and to examine the ways and means by which the international community's support for Africa's efforts can best be mobilized.

(*Signed*) Jean **Ping**

Enclosure

[Original: English and French]

Inaugural meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
7 June 2012

Conclusions

1. The Support and Follow-up Group on the Situation in Mali, established by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 314th meeting, convened at ministerial level, in Bamako, on 20 March 2012, held its inaugural meeting in Abidjan, on 7 June 2012.

2. The meeting, organized under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations, was chaired by Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The meeting brought together the ECOWAS member States, the core countries, the current Chair of the African Union, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and African Union member States sitting on this body, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners.

3. The participants expressed their serious concern over the situation obtaining in Mali. In this regard, they noted the growing grip of the armed, terrorist and criminal groups operating in the northern part of Mali, the increasing linkages between terrorist and criminal networks, as well as the violations of human rights there and the dire humanitarian situation prevailing on the ground.

4. The participants also noted the continuing fragility of the institutions established within the framework of the process for the restoration of constitutional order, following the coup d'état of 22 March 2012, as evidenced by the physical assault on the Interim President, Mr. Dioncounda Traoré, and the persistence of impediments to the action of the transitional institutions.

5. The participants noted that the current situation in Mali, which calls into question basic principles of the African Union, namely respect for the unity and territorial integrity of member States, as well the rejection of unconstitutional changes of government, terrorism and cross-border crimes, constitutes a serious threat to the viability of the State of Mali, the stability and security of the region and of the continent as a whole, as well as to international security.

6. In this context, the participants stressed the imperative and urgency of a closely coordinated, rapid and efficient international action to take up the challenges at hand. This action must be based on the pooling of regional and continental efforts, within the framework of the African Union, and close partnership with the United Nations and other members of the international community.

7. In conformity with the mandate given to it by the Peace and Security Council, the Group considered both the institutional crisis and the security and humanitarian situation in northern Mali.

8. Regarding the institutional crisis, the participants welcomed the efforts made by the President of Burkino Faso, within the framework of the mediation entrusted to him by ECOWAS. They noted, with satisfaction, the results achieved which made it possible, in accordance with the Framework Agreement of 6 April 2012, to establish the various institutions responsible for the management of the transition.

9. The participants encouraged the Government, the political forces and civil society, including the representatives of the northern regions, within the framework of an inclusive national dialogue and the functioning of the constitutional institutions of the country, to quickly develop, with the support of ECOWAS, a road map stating the various tasks to be carried out during the transition, so as to attain the objectives set, namely the reorganization and restructuring of the defence and security forces, the restoration of State authority throughout the territory of Mali and the organization of free, transparent and fair elections, within the agreed period of 12 months. They also encouraged the transitional institutions to fully assume their responsibilities. They expressed the readiness of their respective organizations and countries to support the transitional institutions and to mobilize the necessary financial and other forms of necessary support.

10. In this context, the participants stressed the need for close and continued cooperation between the Government and the different political actors and civil society in Mali, on the various challenges faced by the country. In so doing, the objective is to form an all-inclusive and more representative Government, in order to build the broadest consensus possible that would allow Mali to overcome the daunting challenges that it is currently facing. They urged the different national stakeholders to take all necessary initiatives to this end, taking into account the ECOWAS mediation, with the support of the African Union and the United Nations.

11. The participants reaffirmed the need to establish the necessary conditions to enable the transitional institutions to fully exercise their responsibilities, in conditions of security and without any interference by the military junta and its civilian supporters, as well as the need for the scrupulous respect for fundamental freedoms. After having strongly condemned the unacceptable physical assault against the Interim President, the participants:

(i) demanded the rapid identification of all the perpetrators and sponsors of this assault, for them to be brought to justice, without prejudice to actions that could be initiated by the relevant international mechanisms;

(ii) demanded that the military junta (the National Council for the Recovery of Democracy and the Restoration of the State) be immediately dissolved and pull out from the management of the transition, and that the armed forces focus exclusively, under the authority of the Interim President and the Government, on their primary task of preserving and defending the unity and territorial integrity of Mali;

(iii) expressed the determination of their respective organizations and countries to impose and to scrupulously implement sanctions against all military and civilian elements that, in one way or another, hinder the transition and the action of the Government, fuel hatred or perpetrate acts of violence and intimidation, including arbitrary arrests. They called upon ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations to start preparing a list of the individuals concerned, with the support of the different countries and

organizations members of the Support and Follow-up Group. In addition to these sanctions, the appropriate international mechanisms could also be seized of the matter; and

(iv) requested ECOWAS, with the support of the African Union, the United Nations and other international partners, to take the necessary steps to ensure the security of the officials of the transition, in particular the Interim President. In this regard, the participants encouraged the Transitional Government to unconditionally extend to ECOWAS all the necessary cooperation.

12. As regards the situation in the northern part of Mali, the participants reiterated the strong condemnation by the international community of the armed attacks against the Malian State and the unacceptable and dangerous presence of terrorist and criminal groups in that region of the country. They emphasized the danger that recourse to armed rebellion posed to the viability of African States and to the democratization processes on the continent, as well as the serious threat posed by the entrenchment of terrorist and criminal groups in the northern part of Mali, for that country, the region and the rest of the international community.

13. The participants condemned the violations of human rights and abuses committed by the armed and terrorist groups operating in northern Mali. In particular, they expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in the region, as well as the burden borne by the countries hosting a large number of Malian refugees, particularly Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. They requested the humanitarian agencies working in the field to pursue their efforts. With regard particularly to the delivery of humanitarian aid in northern Mali, the participants stressed the need to spare no efforts to ensure that the aid destined to the Malian civilian population is not diverted by the armed and terrorist groups occupying that part of the Malian territory.

14. The participants stressed that any solution to the crisis in northern Mali should be based on the following principles:

(i) the scrupulous respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, which cannot be the subject of any discussion or negotiation;

(ii) the rejection of the recourse to armed rebellion, which cannot be justified, especially in the context of the existing channels of expression in Mali which allow for the peaceful pursuit of any legitimate claim; and

(iii) the implacable struggle against the terrorist and criminal networks, which must be neutralized by all possible legitimate means.

15. On this basis, the participants expressed the support of their respective organizations and countries to all efforts aimed at addressing, by peaceful means, the causes of the recurring rebellions in northern Mali. Dialogue with groups willing to negotiate should be based on the respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, as well as the total rejection of terrorism and related criminal activities. The participants affirmed their support for the continuation of the ECOWAS mediation, with the involvement of the core countries, in accordance with the decision taken by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 20 March 2012, in Bamako. The participants stressed the need to obtain from the groups concerned the acceptance of the above-mentioned principles and to conclude the negotiations, as

soon as possible, failing which other options, including the use of force, would be considered.

16. At the same time, the participants recognized the need to mobilize all appropriate means, including military, to help the Malian Government to reorganize and restructure its defence and security forces, and support its efforts to restore, in the shortest possible time, its authority over the northern part of the country, as well as fight the terrorist and criminal groups and other entities whose actions undermine stability and security in Mali and the whole region. They welcomed the initiative taken by ECOWAS to activate its standby force, and recognized the important contribution that could be made by the African Union, through the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, the core countries, through the structures they had already established, including the Fusion and Liaison Unit in Algiers and the Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Tamanrasset.

17. The participants affirmed the willingness of their respective organizations and countries to provide financial, logistical and other support to such efforts. They also affirmed their willingness to work for the speedy mobilization of adequate support from the United Nations on the basis of a formal request, accompanied by a specific mandate and concept of operations, submitted through the African Union. In this regard, they urged the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to convene, as soon as possible, to take the decisions it would deem appropriate, in order to mobilize the international community, particularly the Security Council of the United Nations, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, in support of the efforts of the continent.

18. More generally, the participants reaffirmed the need for a regional and long-term approach to address the structural problems facing the Sahel region. In this respect, they stressed the relevance of the recommendations endorsed by the ministerial meeting of the Peace and Security Council in Bamako and the importance of the strategy developed by the European Union.

19. The participants expressed their support for the conference on drought in the Sahel that the African Union and ECOWAS intend to organize at the end of June 2012, on the sidelines of the next ECOWAS Summit, in Yamoussoukro. They called upon the international community to fully support the initiative.

20. On the follow-up to the conclusions of this meeting, the participants agreed to:

(i) meet, at least once every two months, under the auspices of ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations, as a consultation and coordination structure on the situation in Mali, in its dual aspects of the institutional crisis and the situation in the north, in order to facilitate an effective international action in support of the African efforts;

(ii) recommend to the African Union and ECOWAS to send a delegation comprising, in addition to these two organizations, the United Nations and the European Union to deliver the message of the inaugural meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group to all the Malian stakeholders, in support of the mediation of ECOWAS and the efforts to restore the authority of the State over the northern part of the country;

(iii) convene, at the initiative of the co-chairs, in between the regular meetings of the Group, restricted meetings based on issues to be considered, in

Addis Ababa or any other venue agreed to by the co-chairs, to follow up these conclusions and submit recommendations on the way forward; and

(iv) request the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to meet, as soon as possible, to discuss the situation in Mali, particularly in the light of these conclusions, for the purpose of formally requesting the support of the United Nations Security Council.

21. The participants thanked ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations for having taken the initiative of organizing this meeting. They expressed their gratitude to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for having accepted to host the meeting and for its generous hospitality, and to UNOCI for all logistical arrangements it made.